

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #6496/01 3280827
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 240827Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0054
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0811
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 4195
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN 0338
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5583
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3105
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 5323
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 1262
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1679
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1962
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006496

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

TREASURY FOR OTI - JSERAFINI AND RLOEFFLER
JUSTICE FOR CRM/BSWARTZ/CALEXANDER/SHAYDEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2016

TAGS: [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA RECEPTIVE TO PDAS URBANCIC RE PKK IN EUROPE

REF:

Classified By: Economic Counselor Tom Goldberger for reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Capping a week of meetings in Europe, S/CT PDAS Urbancic led an interagency team to Ankara for meetings November 10 with Turkish officials on PKK in Europe. Urbancic briefed the Turks on the team's European meetings and suggested several avenues for follow-up. The team urged a focus on PKK criminal activities in Europe and sought to find a test case that would engender cross-pollination between different European agencies and countries. Turkish officials reiterated that they appreciate our PKK in Europe effort but do not see it as a substitute for action in Iraq. It is important to keep up the momentum created by this trip through effective follow up. End Summary.

Briefing Turks on Europe Meetings

¶2. (C) Following meetings in Berlin, the Hague, Brussels and London, PDAS Urbancic's team held a series of meetings in Ankara, both with Turkish officials and European diplomats stationed here. Briefing on the European meetings, Urbancic and his colleagues said they had found European officials by and large receptive to the U.S. message but both sides needed to work harder to get to an operational level with leads that could be used for law enforcement investigations. In particular, he was encouraged by German aggressiveness and Belgian willingness to go after the PKK, and by a recent court decision in Belgium that sustained a retroactive conviction for a DHKPC operative for supporting the Sabanci assassination. He explained that we needed to find ways to bridge the gap between intelligence-generated information and information that could be used for law enforcement investigations.

¶3. (C) Urbancic and EUR/SE Office Director Silliman discussed the need to explore any avenue that would work to disrupt PKK activities. They explained that European law

enforcement and counterterrorism officials were generally ill-equipped to comment on the issue of PKK use of asylum and refugee status, these issues being handled by courts and other agencies. Turkish MFA officials provided a list of PKK operatives with asylum status in Europe. Silliman also briefed on the issue of flights from Europe to northern Iraq and the need for Europeans to try to interdict cash couriers on those flights.

Focus on Criminality in Europe

¶4. (C) Urbancic made the case that the most fruitful avenue to disrupt PKK activities in western Europe was most likely to involve focusing on PKK criminal activity in Europe -- money-laundering, extortion, human trafficking, narcotics trafficking, etc. -- rather than trying to prosecute PKKers for terrorism charges which is rarely successful in European courts, or to put too much hope into extradition requests. Urbancic stressed that the key was sharing information that would provide investigators a factual basis, upon which they could open broader investigations based upon reasonable suspicion and collect the evidence necessary to convict PKK operatives. At a meeting with officials from the Turkish MFA, MOJ, Turkey's Financial Intelligence Unit, police, jandarma, Prime Ministry and the general staff, MFA Director General for Security Affairs expressed openness to this approach, as did the Prime Ministry Director General for Security Affairs, Muammer Turker, in a separate meeting. The team undertook to look for a test case or cases that would enable this to work and, ideally, would involve cross-border cooperation between law enforcement agencies in different European countries. Resident Legal Advisor Hayden described a project to bring European prosecutors to Ankara for a workshop with Turkish prosecutors to develop a network and to discuss all available legislative tools and and cooperative measures. Both Guven and MOJ officials were pleased with the suggestion though the MOJ officials said they needed higher-level approval. To complement the focus on criminality, Silliman and Urbancic also suggested that greater prosecutorial cooperation with the Europeans should provide relevant information exchanges that could lead to more frequent denial of PKK asylum requests. This suggestion was broadly favored by the Turks as revocation of asylum status is difficult to impossible in many European countries.

Turkish Reactions

¶5. (C) Turkish officials, led by Ambassador Guven, expressed appreciation for U.S. efforts, reiterating the need for a "political determination" in Europe to fight PKK. For this reason, Guven said U.S. demarches, particularly those that place the fight against the PKK in the context of the global war on terrorism, make a difference. He specifically urged that the U.S. raise the PKK issue in EU fora and EUR/SE Silliman recounted earlier U.S. demarches to the EU in formal US-EU consultations on accession states (COELA), terrorism (COTER) and justice and home affairs. As they have said at every meeting on PKK in Europe, however, the Turks noted that they do not view the effort in Europe as a substitute to action in Iraq. Guven also expressed frustration that Germany is the only European country to ban the PKK, and that the EU terrorist designation of the PKK only results in financial sanctions. In the team's meeting with PKK Special Envoy General (ret.) Edip Baser(septel), he briefly acknowledged our efforts in Europe and urged action in Iraq. Ambassador Guven urged more consistent communication to Turkey about our efforts in Europe, either through the Turkish Embassy in Washington or the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, specifically praising an earlier meeting between Turkish Embassy officials and the USG interagency working group on PKK.

16. (C) MFA officials provided powerpoint presentations on PKK networks in Europe and PKK financing. Guven asked for U.S. help with Belgium on the 'Operation Sputnik' case, a prosecution of PKK companies and individuals arising from pan-European police raids in 1996 that has failed to make progress in the courts because of technical errors in the prosecutor's submission. Turkish officials are concerned the case may run up against the statute of limitations and urged that this be our "test case." Guven also raised the activities of the Washington Kurdish Institute and the American Kurdish Information Network as well as five internet sites hosted in the U.S. which he asserted had pro-PKK content.

European Diplomats Receptive

17. (C) In separate meetings, European diplomats in Ankara also seemed receptive. UK Ambassador Nick Baird, who has served both in the Home Office and UK Mission to the EU, thought it would be useful to prod Eurojust to open a file on a PKK case which will facilitate information-sharing across Europe. Visiting Metropolitan Police Commander McDowall was also receptive but pointed out the resource issue of too few investigators following too many terrorism cases -- nevertheless, he did offer to try to direct investigative assets to look at leads and see if a fresh investigation against PKK criminality could be undertaken. UK Counterterrorism officer Jim McKee said British investigators had repeatedly looked into extortion cases but victims were afraid to testify. German Polcouns Helga Barth said the TAK (Kurdistan Freedom Hawks) have now been listed by the EU. EUR/SE Director Silliman offered to explore having U.S. intelligence analysts brief European law enforcement personnel on what we know about PKK activities in Europe. The Dutch DCM focused more on the political, social and economic measures needed in Turkey's southeast to undermine the PKK's appeal rather than on cooperating to break up PKK networks. The Swiss military attache told us the Swiss Foreign Minister is an old-fashioned socialist who is anti-Turkish, and will therefore likely stymie Swiss actions against the PKK as long as she is in office.

----- --
Definition of Terrorism, Broader CT cooperation
----- --

18. (C) Both in the meeting with Prime Ministry D.G. Turker and in a small-group meeting with Guven, Urbancic raised broader counterterrorism cooperation, pointing out that strong Turkish cooperation would help with the PKK issue. Urbancic specifically raised the Turkocentric definition of terrorism under Turkish law and we briefed Turker on the problem -- which he was not familiar with. Guven, repeated earlier statements that he agreed with us but that the political level had decided otherwise. Urbancic also raised Turkish non-participation in a meeting of Iraq's neighbors on biometric measures against foreign fighters; Turker seemed to recognize the value of biometric cooperation but deferred to the Minister of Interior. Ambassador Guven raised Turkish difficulties in getting answers about transliterations of Arabic names of 1267-designated individuals. He asked that USUN contact the Turkish Mission as some of these names were proposed by the U.S. Finally, Urbancic suggested another area for greater US-Turkish cooperation -- seminars on international best practices in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency an idea Guven endorsed, though he cautioned against describing the PKK as an insurgency,.

Follow-up Actions

19. (C) A number of follow-up actions were committed to in the Ankara meetings:

--Research appropriate test case(s) to pursue with European law enforcement(S/CT, EUR/SE, interagency).

--Offer to send intelligence analysts covering PKK to meet with European law enforcement agencies (EUR/SE, IC).

--Look into mechanism to get Eurojust to open a PKK file, as per the UK Ambassador's suggestion (S/CT, EUR/SE, DOJ).

--Ankara RLA to organize prosecutors' workshop (Ankara RLA).

--Raise Sputnik case with Belgians (EUR, S/CT).

--Obtain listing of TAK in the U.S. as a PKK alias (EUR/SE, S/CT, interagency)

--Requesting USUN work with Turkish PermRep on information regarding 1267-listed names that the U.S. sponsored (EUR/SE, IO, EB, Treasury).

--Request Turkish inclusion in U.S.-EU terrorism finance workshops (Treasury, EUR/SE, EB, DOJ)

--Repeat Turkish Embassy meeting with interagency working group in Washington (EUR/SE).

--Look into the GoT claim that the American Kurdish Information Network leader made statements that contained "terrorist propaganda," as per Guven,s request. (EUR/SE, S/CT)

Comment

¶10. (C) S/CT PDAS' trip was an important step to keep forward momentum on our effort against PKK in Europe. We need to figure out how to institutionalize this effort, however, so that we continue moving forward and are not dependent on ad hoc trips by USG officials. This might also help meet Ambassador Guven's request for more consistent communication. S/CT and Embassy Ankara will insert this issue into the agenda of the next RSI strategy session slated for early December. Follow up actions are key if we are to succeed in getting this effort to a more operational level with European law enforcement.

PDAS Urbancic and EUR/SE Silliman cleared this message.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON